

ms card ✓

I return Turner Catledge's memorandum which you received from Arthur Sulsberger. I have taken a copy as I found much of interest in it.

SIGNED  
ALLEN W. DULLES  
Director

**Attachment**

AWD/c  
1 cc--DCI  
1 cc--ER w/ photo copy of att.  
1 cc--Reading

REF ID: A6421

SECRET

White House

Paris, May 22, 1957

Darling M'Lee and Dougie:

I recrossed the Iron Curtain a few days ago after a 12-day visit to Soviet Russia. Before my notes get cold or my memory fails or, more likely, before I wear out my stories from constant re-telling, I am going to attempt a narrative account of my visit for my dear daughters. You may recall that I took the same method in making a record of a trip to Europe and the Middle East several years ago. I hope, of course, these rambling remarks may be of some interest to you.

As you know, this was my first visit to the Soviet Union. It was jam-packed with travel and sight-seeing; so much so that I find it hard to believe that I saw and did so much. The climax of the visit was an interview of almost two hours with Nikita Khrushchev, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, who is both the most dominant figure in world Communism and top man of the ruling clique in Russia. That interview was sent out without change by censorship, and published in The New York Times of May 11. Parts of it were published throughout Europe and England; and on Tuesday, May 14, Pravda, the Communist Party paper in Moscow, printed the Kremlin's own version, which, I am told, agreed in every major point with my own.

My 12-day visit hardly qualifies me as an "expert" on the Soviet Union. I do not propose, therefore, to write a book or a series of magazine articles sounding the profundities of either the USSR or international communism. My trip, carried out under the auspices of Intourist, the tourism agency of the Soviet Government, was on the whole very comfortable so far as creature comforts were concerned.

I was in Russia at the beginning of Spring. It was also during the May Day festival, highlighted by a huge celebration on May 1, on which occasion Communists all over the world, and especially Russia, indulge themselves in great demonstrations and elaborate boasts. Such impressions as I state here are admittedly superficial. I am sure I had far better treatment than people who make a business of everyday life of living in Russia, whether Russians or foreigners.

I took to the Soviet Union my own preconceptions of what it was like. Such were the only points of comparison I had. I can only relate what I saw and heard to my own imagination, which naturally was made up of what I had seen, read and heard regarding the USSR and its life.

I found on the whole, again making allowances for superficialities, that I had undersold Russia, or at least the part of it I visited. Incidentally, I visited Moscow, Kiev and Leningrad, being recalled from the latter to Moscow for the Khrushchev interview. I had expected cold, rigid, courteous, yet suspecting reception. I expected people with whom I dealt to be quite inefficient, not too interested in the comfort or welfare of Westerners, and almost openly resentful. The treatment I received by no means bore out these preconceptions. I was treated cordially everywhere. I detected no signs of hate or resentment, although a professed suspicion that the United States wanted to make war on Russia. I was handled by Intourist with good humor and efficiency.

Regardless of the evangelism of one member of the American Embassy staff, who tried to convince me otherwise, I experienced some agreeable things. I expected universal drabness--dark suits, black-hooded peasants, frazzled shoes and especially dark cotton and wool stockings on the women. Indeed, I saw quite a bit of this, especially in the rural areas outside the cities. But I also saw colored dresses, polished fingernails, silk stockings. For example, many women had fairly well-made clothing, especially coats. I even saw lipstick and rouge on the waitresses in the Intourist Hotel in Kiev, and on numerous women about the streets of Leningrad.

Having no evidence to refute it, I accepted the preachment of the American Embassy evangelist that all this was a bad quality. My point is that I saw many things of this nature I didn't expect to see, and on the average a better appearance of people than I anticipated. The weather was agreeable--sunny days and clear cool nights. But the Embassy evangelist almost convinced me that I was seeing something wrong. He said I should see the countryside back in the hinterland during the winter when the pumps were frozen and there was no hot water in the hotels. I felt it was almost heresy to reply to this devout one that it wasn't Winter; that I wasn't back in the hinterlands, that I was in Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev in the Spring and was actually seeing trees and flowers. I told him that I didn't think I was being subversive by making this frank admission.

- 3 -

I went to Russia as part of an extensive trip which I had planned for visiting with foreign correspondents of The New York Times at their field stations. I made application for a visa about March 1. When it came through about three and a half weeks later, I decided to so arrange my trip that I would go to Russia first. Other visits, so I planned, would be made to Sweden, Holland, England, France, Germany, Poland, Yugoslavia, Italy, Spain, Greece, Turkey, Lebanon, Israel and Egypt. I had it in mind that by going to Russia first, I would perhaps get the most uncomfortable part of my trip over first; furthermore, I could take more time than I perhaps could take after I had come down to two-day stands; also that perhaps I would be more interesting to our correspondents after having gone to Russia. It's amazing how well my judgment is turning out.

Before leaving New York, Herbert Andree, my efficient and faithful assistant, arranged through Cosmos Travel Agency, the entire Russian trip. Our Russian experts, E. C. Daniel and Harrison Salisbury had advised me to go Intourist. Daniel, in fact, advised strongly that we go through the travel agency. He said that for a trip of two weeks, which was the extent of my visa, I would be able to see much more if I went Intourist. At least I would be more comfortable. Through Cosmos, I bought a ten-day "package." For the price of thirty dollars a day, paid in advance, I was entitled to de luxe hotel accommodations; four meals a day (breakfast, dinner, tea and supper); services of a guide whenever I wanted one; use of an automobile and chauffeur at my own command; and even a cash spending allowance of 25 rubles (\$2.50) a day. I was supplied with a book of coupons calling for all this.

So supplied and so equipped, together with a ticket on SAS airlines from New York to Moscow, via Copenhagen, I became airborne over Idlewild Airport shortly before 5 P. M. on May 28.

The first hop from New York to Copenhagen was without particular incident, except it was the first time I'd ever occupied a sleeping berth on an airplane. Good thing. Expensive too. I soon came to suspect, however, some degree of apprehension among the crew concerning this passenger heading for Russia. They evidently thought I needed feeding up for the kill. We'd hardly cleared Fire

- 4 -

Island when they started feeding me, and they kept it up at increasing intervals until I had gone to bed. They resumed it the next morning when I arose.

We arrived in Copenhagen about twenty minutes late, which gave only twenty minutes for me to make the change to a plane on Airflot, the official line of the USSR. I was not terribly surprised at the rather shabby nature of the Soviet plane. It was a two-motor affair somewhat resembling the Convair on lines of the U.S., although it had only twenty-one seats. There was a very agreeable young hostess without uniform who apparently had not combed her hair in the morning, and very apparently had neither taken a bath. Two of my senses told me this. She was very personable, however, and spoke reasonably good English. I noticed first the presence of seat belts. I had been told there was no such thing in the USSR. I came to find out later than my original information was very nearly correct. The further I got into the interior of Russia the more Russian things seemed to get. But when Russian facilities get near the West, they have a tendency to become Westernized. Such, I was told, accounted for the seat belts in the plane and also the practice of revving up the motors. That was done in Copenhagen, but never afterwards.

There were only three passengers on the plane. Incidentally, it was kept well out to one side at the Copenhagen airport. Whether this was the requirement of Denmark or of Russia I didn't learn. The three passengers were a small dark Englishman who spoke Russian, a squat moustached Italian, resembling Thomas D'Alasandro, mayor of Baltimore, who spoke only in English, and myself. After about two and one-half hours in the air we stopped at Riga for customs inspection and lunch. The customs inspection was very superficial and so was the lunch. They didn't even take our bags off the plane, and asked only about currency. After they were assured we had no rubles, the officials didn't seem interested in anything else. The lunch consisted of fried shivers of some kind of animal, whose identity I was just as happy not to ask. There were fried potatoes which evidently had been cooked a second time, and a salad which evidently had worn itself weary sitting on the table. The meal was on the house.

When after two more hours of flight I found myself in Moscow, I saw very quickly that I was not going to suffer any inattention.

- 5 -

Bill Jorden, our Chief Moscow Correspondent, was there to meet me; so was an Intourist guide with a car and chauffeur. I was informed before arriving that I would stay at the National Hotel, which is run by Intourist. So the guide told me I was to be taken immediately there. Jorden had other plans. He wanted me to go with him in our own office Chevrolet, driven by our Russian chauffeur, Victor. For, he said, the Japanese Ambassador was giving a reception in honor of the Emperor's birthday and it was possible we would run into some of the Soviet bigwigs there. The Intourist guide understood very readily, made no protest and courteously offered to take my bags to the hotel. I took one traveling case along, however, in order to change shirts at Jorden's apartment. After my change, we rushed over to the hotel where the Japanese reception was going on. And there I first saw Nikita.

Yes, Mr. Khrushchev was right there, surrounded by a crowd of Japanese, whom I later discovered were diplomats and newspaper men. I also caught sight of Nikolai Bulganin, President of the Council of Ministers--another member of the Party's Presidium and titular head of the Soviet Government. Bulganin was standing at a table bowing and smiling and talking, acting for all like a Kentucky Colonel at an after-Derby party. Khrushchev evidently was the greater drawing card.

In conversations before leaving New York with Daniel and Salisbury, both of whom, of course, had lived and worked recently in Russia, they urged that I try to see some of the leaders. At their suggestion I had sent cablegrams, over my own signature, to Khrushchev, Bulganin and Marshal Zhukov, the third member of the Big Three; to Molotov, Gromyko, the present Foreign Minister, and others. They had cabled on their own to certain contacts, notably Leonid Ilyichev, head of the press department of the Foreign Ministry. They also urged me to wangle invitations to any official receptions that might be taking place, for diplomacy these days in Moscow is on a cocktail basis. Daniel and Salisbury both advised a "brassy" approach. They suggested that if I got to a reception attended by any of the bigwigs, grab someone who spoke English and Russian, walk right up and engage them in conversation. That's what I did.

- 6 -

Jorden himself speaks quite passable Russian--at least he can understand and make himself understood in it--so we laid down an assault on Bulganin. He was standing in the center of a long table, with other long tables fanning out at right angles. It was evident all around that a great party had been going on--dirty plates, empty and overturned bottles, used glasses and a general hubbub of people who were staying to the bitter end.

Jorden presented me to Bulganin as a newly arrived American, and representative of The New York Times. He bowed low, extended his hand and bade me welcome to the Soviet Union. He asked how long I planned to stay, where I planned to go and then responded to my answers with a sort of "Tut, tut, you should stay longer and see more." Others began to gather around us. Not having in mind anything special to say to him, I asked if he had ever visited my country. No, he said, but he'd love to. Then he added some general remarks about the need for exchange of personal visits between high governmental officials. "See these people," he said through Jorden's translation, and pointing to the Japs. "We had misunderstandings. Now they come to see us, and we talk the same language."

A blonde who identified herself to me as Mrs. Edmund Stevens entered the group and began interpreting. Suddenly, Bulganin fixed his eyes on her and said, "I don't believe I know you; let me get my own interpreter." With this a young man stepped up and began doing the honors. Bulganin then reached for a glass saying, "Let's drink a toast." He had trouble finding a glass; also, the liquor had given out. But someone produced a bottle of vodka, and he and I drank a toast to what I understood was the mutual happiness and health of our two countries.

Just then Khrushchev came along, and Bulganin introduced us. He was cordial, bouncy and red-faced. A veritable throng of diplomats and newspapermen were following him. He had started a line of talk about guided missiles and the newspapermen were hot on the trail of a story. Just then Gromyko came up and entered the conversation largely as an interpreter. He looked questioningly at me as if to say, "Haven't I seen you somewhere before?" Then I

- 7 -

recalled a meeting we had had in the suite of Secretary Byrnes at the Savoy Plaza in New York. He interpreted the question to Bulganin, Khrushchev having waddled away, followed by his crowd. Gromyko then replied to me by asking that I give his regards to Mr. Byrnes when I saw him.

The very fact that we got into the Japanese reception was at first a surprise. It wouldn't have been had I known then of the smoothness of Bill Jordan. I had no invitation or ticket. He had only one. As we walked up to the door, he whispered to me that the thuggish men standing around were Russian secret police. Two Japanese attendants also were standing by. Jordan approached a desk barring the way, said something in Russian, then in Japanese (I heard the word "New York Times" and "Cutledge") and the lackeys simply bowed us in. Once inside, I had no inhibitions about bearding the big shots. The worst they could do was simply not to talk. But they didn't even take that opportunity. They talked, or rather conversed, although they didn't say anything of world-shaking importance.

The first people I recognized at the reception were Max Frankel, our new second man in Moscow, and his charming bride, the former Tobia Brown, also former Times correspondent at Barnard College. I saw a number of other people whom I knew, mostly newspaper people, of course, and I met numerous others. I was particularly impressed by the Pakistani Ambassador--also the Jap envoy who was very friendly.

The official reception, as I have indicated, has come to be a vital institution in international communication in Russia. They furnish practically the only contact between Russian officials and diplomatic representatives of Western countries. Reading the newspapers and attending receptions are admittedly the only way American diplomats have of getting information. Such contacts were highly serviceable to Chip Bohlen, who spoke and read the language expertly, and who had the courage and ability to match wits and tough talk with the Russians, high and low. I was told that cocktail diplomacy actually began in the USSR at the American Embassy's Independence Day celebration a year ago last July. Bulganin, Khrushchev and



- 8 -

Zhukov, and other high dignitaries showed up at that time. The Russians have learned to use the system expertly, apparently. They even indicate their feelings toward other countries by the degree of rank they send to the various receptions. On Wednesday following the Japanese party on Monday, I went to a Dutch reception in honor of the Queen's birthday. Eyes were popping and necks craning to see who, if anyone, was coming from the Kremlin. Finally, the Israeli Ambassador came in and remarked to a group of us: "They won't be here today. I know by the rank of police officers outside." The Soviet and Dutch had been calling each other names and the "big snub" was in order. The Israeli Ambassador received the same treatment the following week at his reception commemorating Israel's Independence Day.

The day after the Japanese reception, which was my second day in Russia, Jorden and I had lunch at the American Embassy with the charge d'affaires, Richard Davis. He has been holding the fort since Ambassador Bohlen's departure. The Norwegian Ambassador to the USSR also was there. He was very interesting and informative. He and Davis confirmed readily reports I had heard of difficulties of diplomatic representation, and also the important part played by the institution of the reception. They also believed the Russians to be sincere in their desire for a new high-level approach to world problems.

That morning I had one of my most pleasant experiences, the meeting of Alexis, who was to be my Intourist guide throughout my trip. Alexis, who told me he was thirty years old, was a former school teacher. He had taught in Siberia "on a mission," he said, for several years when he had a breakdown in health. He gave up his teaching job, for which he was paid 2,000 rubles (\$200 at current exchange rates). When he recovered, he accepted a guide's job at 1,000 rubles (\$100. But he liked the guide job, he said. He got to meet "such nice people"; also, he traveled around a lot on expense account so he was all right. He had bad eyes, although he did not wear glasses. In fact, I saw very few people wearing glasses anywhere. He told me that his left eye was what "you Americans call an idle eye." I had never heard such an expression, but let it go.

- 9 -

Before leaving New York I had received from the Daniel-Salisbury "travel bureau" a list of things I should see in Moscow, Kiev and Leningrad. I gave the list to Alexis. What I saw was taken directly from that list. If, as many will doubtless suspect, I was shown only what the Russians wanted me to see, then I am, or Cliff and Harrison are, largely to blame.

My first excursion with Alexis was to the GUM department store. It was quite a spectacle. The store is not in the exact nature of an American department store. Rather, it is a collection of small shops, comparable to one of our arcades. But what impressed me most was the evidence of buying power. It was the day before May Day and the place was packed and jammed. Lines ran out from every counter where anything was for sale, ranging from toy balloons, which had the longest line, to the jewelry stalls, which had less, and even to \$180 (1,800) men's suits. Shoes were being sold over the counters without try-ons. Certainly a break for the clerks. Suits and dresses were going the same way, like hot cakes at a county fair. All sorts of merchandise were on display. I examined much of it and would say that the quality was nothing to compare, in the main, with American goods. But the stuff certainly was moving.

Evidently there would be quite an inflation in the larger cities of Russia were there not such rigid price controls. Consumer goods are in short supply at best. The same kind of buying I saw in Moscow, I also saw in Kiev and Leningrad. I thought the quality of things in Leningrad was superior. The store displays in Kiev were the best of the three. I didn't buy anything at GUM the first day, but went back later and bought some phonograph records (long-playing ones for the equivalent of 70 cents each) and some novelty boxes. Most luxury things were terribly expensive. I couldn't stay long in the meat and fish store. Between the fish and the Russians, the smell--whew!

I was told that the regime (all stores are owned by the state) had fed quite a bit of high-priced merchandise into the stores to try to syphon off the excess purchasing power. But evidence of buying pressure was present everywhere I went. I saw televisions in many

- 10 -

shops. On a trip out from Moscow, I was impressed by the sight of TV aerials. I was told there is a backlog of automobile orders of more than a year's standing. There is no official installment buying, although I was told there is quite a bit of "personal" lending among individuals, for the purchase of automobiles, television sets and the like. TV sets are about the same price as in the U. S., while automobiles are a shade lower in price and perhaps many shades lower in quality. These prices are calculated at the new ten rubles to one dollar tourist rate. But in terms of Russian purchasing power they are very high. The cheapest Soviet car costs the average worker a whole year's pay.

The May Day parade through Red Square was something I truly would have hated to miss. Jordan had obtained for me a ticket to the reserved stands (stands is correct; no sitting) and I saw the best, though not all of it; it was too long. The leaders were there in full feather, all standing on the parapet of the Lenin-Stalin tomb. First was a military parade, not too different from most military parades, although the 300-piece band was most impressive, both in size and performance. Then followed a parade of athletic groups, marching and performing. Imagine a soccer game in progress as the whole group moved at about four or five miles an hour through Red Square. By far the most impressive part was the "demonstration" when hundreds of thousands of workers, 100-abreast burst into that square. It was more than impressive, it was terrifying. The throng had been highly organized. It converged from every connecting street into the entrance to the square. Groups had been sent from factories, from offices, from collective farms, from schools and from Lord only knows where else. The number participating were estimated at more than 2,000,000. Men, women and children, with many of the latter carried on parents' shoulders, thronged through, singing and shouting, while a voice from the loudspeaker kept extolling the beauties of communism. Most of the groups carried branches and flowers. A contingent of children, all carrying bouquets, broke on signal and made for the tomb and covered it with flowers.

But the May Day celebration would have been rewarding for me if for no other reasons that it was there I met "the girls." The girls were a group of eighteen television and radio program directors, performers and managers from the United States. They had arrived

- 11 -

at three o'clock that morning directly from the U.S.A. and were about the business of taking things in. They were the type who run home shows, cooking programs and the like. They were dressed fit to kill, and well equipped with note books, cameras and Intourist guides. Two young men and one woman guide had them in tow, and what a ball they were having. The mother hen of the group was one Mrs. Beatrice Johnson, who runs some kind of television home show in Kansas City and who makes a speciality of organizing touring parties such as the one I saw. They had with them two men, a photographer and a sound recorder operator. They had been greeted at the airport that morning by a band and fully 5,000 people.

When they discovered who I was, they talked my ear off. They told me how they were going to our Embassy that afternoon for cocktails; how then they were going to get Dick Davis to fix them up for a visit with some of the Soviet leaders. I started to tell them to save themselves the trouble and Davis the embarrassment, for he couldn't do a thing about it. But I thought I'd best keep my tongue. They and I got fed up with the parade about the same time and started back to the National Hotel, where they as well as I were staying. I then discovered that another man was with them, a plain-clothes security policeman. He turned out to be a very nice and effective person. We had to walk all the way around the Kremlin, two and one-half miles, and talk our way through the crowd at every intersection. The security policeman, who had his little ten-year-old daughter with him, certainly knew the magic words. We were the only people who crossed the lines for five hours or more.

Now, try to imagine my surprise when, two days later, returning from a trip to a collective farm, I found out that the girls had seen both Bulganin and Zhukov. Hearing this, Jordan called Mrs. Johnson and invited her out to drinks with us. Instead, she came to dinner with Jordan, the Frankels and myself to a large state-owned restaurant (everything is state owned). Yes, they had seen Bulganin and Zhukov "and what interesting and nice people they were!" They had sat in Bulganin's chair, each in turn. They had interviewed him on what he liked to eat, what he liked in women's hats, and Lord knows what else. Zhukov, "that nice general", had given each a medal. Furthermore, Bulganin had allowed them to take pictures and make a sound recording of the whole procedure. This is NOT hearsay; I sat

- 12 -

for more than an hour after dinner and listened to the playback of the recording. So, I fancy that Kansas City, Rochester, Detroit, and other places represented by "the girls" are going to hear a lot from Russia this Fall, some of it in Bulganin's and Zhukov's own voices. I asked Mrs. Johnson how she had arranged the meeting. It turned out she had done it all by telephone from Kansas City, directly to Bulganin's office.

Speaking of restaurants, the four of us, Jordan, the Frankels and I, went to the Praga restaurant on May Day eve. There was a band playing American dance music. The Russians ate it up. We asked some of the girls to dance with us, and they did. After a while, some others came over and asked us to dance. They danced very well indeed, but were unable to converse at all because of the language barrier. The point here is that all classes of people seem to be relaxing, certainly from the disciplines which I understood to be the rule in the USSR up until two or three years ago. I heard on every hand that the old Stalinist terror had subsided. People, as I have said, didn't seem reticent to communicate with me, so far as this could be done against the language difficulties. I saw numerous Western people who spoke Russian, who told me of recent visits with Russians and of the freer and easier relations with and among them. The old fear of the knock on the door at night, followed by someone's being whisked off to Siberia, has disappeared, so I was told.

Russians travel about the country to quite an extent, but mostly in organized groups and to specified places. Public bars are not prevalent in the cities I visited, but I was told they were coming into being in many of the outlying neighborhoods.

Alexis and I went on quite a round of sight-seeing. Day after day we were going somewhere. He was most agreeable and helpful. From my first meeting with him he set up a campaign to persuade me to go to Kiev and Leningrad. It was evident, of course, that he wanted to go himself. I figured he must have a gal in each port. It turned out that he had one in Leningrad. I asked Toby Frankel to go along with me to most places around Moscow. She had only been there two and one-half weeks and was eager to get acquainted with the surroundings. I had a nice agreeable guide, an automobile available all of the time, and Alexis was anxious to have Toby along.

- 13 -

One of the places E. C. and Harrison had urged me to see was the ancient monastery at Zagorsk, about 65 miles from Moscow. So Alexis took me there, along with Toby. It was a most impressive place. Services were in progress in three or four chapels. There peasants, largely old women, prayed in the most demonstrative sort of way. The chants of the priests and responses of the congregation were beautiful. I had asked Alexis the day before about the possibility of buying an ikon at some shop. He had advised waiting until we went to Zagorsk. As we completed our tour of the monastery, the young monk, Father Bartholemew, who had been showing us around asked us into the Superior's "inn." There he introduced us to his boss, a tall fine-looking man with long hair and beard, wearing a dark grey habit. After some pleasantries, the chief monk asked if Toby and I would accept two painted ikons. We did, with the best responses Alexis could translate. When I offered a contribution, he refused, "unless," he said, "we wanted to contribute for prayers for some relatives or friends." So, Darlings, you have been prayed for at Zagorsk to the tune of 50 rubles.

I attended two church services in Moscow on the Sunday I was there. One was at a Russian Orthodox church, which was literally mobbed by communicants; the other was a Baptist church, similarly crowded. The Baptists are, I was told, the second largest church group in both Moscow and Kiev. It was just like a Baptist church in Mississippi. The communicants, on the average, were younger than at the Orthodox church, and apparently better off economically. Both groups were highly emotional, especially the Baptists. The singing at the latter was really moving--just like hymns back home but more beautifully done, with full audience participation. But such weeping! I've never seen the like. A man behind me was singing in the most beautiful baritone voice, in perfect harmony with the crowd. I turned to see what he looked like. He was a man of about thirty-five, holding a little boy by the hand. The tears were raining down his face and dripping off his chin. At the Orthodox church I noticed a line of old women going into a side door. I asked Alexis: "Are they going in to confession?" He replied: "No, the toilet."

It suddenly dawned on me on our returning from Zagorsk, that Toby, as a resident foreigner, was not supposed to go more than

- 14 -

25 kilometers (15 miles) from Moscow without special permission from the foreign office. Alexis said to "forget it," he'd fix everything. The next day, before taking off for a collective farm, we checked with the Foreign Office to see whether it would be all right for her to go. "Go ahead," was the word.

All through the countryside I was impressed by the shabbiness of buildings and the generally dirty appearance of things; also the crowded roads. I was unprepared for the prevalence of log houses, either along the roads or in Moscow. I marvelled at the many houses which seemed to be sinking in the middle or falling over backwards. Housing for humans is admittedly one of the weakest part of the Soviet performance. People live jammed up everywhere. There is a frantic apartment-building program going on in each of the cities I visited, but the construction is far below American standards and will hardly survive very long before it disintegrates. The building industry seems to be among the poorest. I would have judged that the American Embassy compound was built at least thirty years ago. I was told, however, that it is scarcely five years old.

I couldn't get used to the women day laborers. Most of the construction workers whom I saw, including railway section hands, street repair people--most of the drudge laborers--were women. Plasterers, house painters, similarly, were women. Quite an unusual sight for one who grew up in an American matriarchy.

I wound up my Moscow sight-seeing with a visit to the Lenin-Stalin tomb and the Kremlin Museum. The two old boys are there, lying in glass cases for all to see. They seem a bit waxey, but by and large they're kept in pretty good shape. Every occasion that the tomb is open for visitors, it is thronged. The Sunday afternoon Toby and I went through, the line extended more than a mile long along the Kremlin wall. Alexis talked his way right up to the head. We both were somewhat embarrassed, but Alexis said it was our privilege as tourists. One thing he couldn't talk away, however, was the requirement to check wraps in every public building. It's not that the authorities are afraid you might be carrying a bomb, according to Alexis, but it's bad etiquette in the USSR for a man or woman to wear a topcoat in a building.

- 15

Reverting to construction, there are seven skyscraper show-buildings in Moscow. One of these is at the University of Moscow. We visited that building one morning. Alexis wanted to show off the school, also wanted us to see how the students lived. He insisted we should see a "bed-sitter", which turned out to be a sitting-room-bedroom (all in one) affair. He said he got the term from an American. I found out later he must have got it from an Englishman. But to the construction. I noticed the building was rather shabby in places. Plaster was falling off in spots and the plumbing was at least pre-World War II. Alexis told me that plans for the building were completed in the Thirties; were then laid aside because of the war; were brought up again in 1950 and the building constructed according to original specifications. That was about as impressive as to learn that in the dormitories men and women live on the same floor. That was somewhat evident in the "bed-sitter" we visited, for the young woman occupant apparently was pregnant.

Kiev was altogether a different city from Moscow, and Leningrad was in a class to itself. The latter was built substantially as a single project of Peter the Great at the beginning of the Eighteenth Century. It has a definite Western European appearance. Kiev is an older city than either, with its roots going back to the Eleventh Century. The Ukrainians, for whom Kiev is the Mecca, are somewhat disdainful of Muscovities, or Russians generally; something of the attitude of a South Carolinian for the Nawth.

At Kiev I ran into several Americans. One was an elderly Jewish man named Kipnis, who once was head of the National Container Corporation before he sold it to Owens Illinois Glass Company for, according to him, \$180,000,000. He was there to see his 80-year-old sister and sundry relatives. I had seen him in Moscow. He spoke Russian, having been born near Kiev and lived there until he was thirteen. He is now seventy-five. He told me he was having no trouble at all getting around and visiting with whomever he pleased. He added that it was a far different story this time than seven years ago. I went with him, his sister and six other relatives to a circus. I saw the damndest animal act I ever saw; even trained chickens, rabbits, turkeys, pigs and porcupines. Mr. Kipnis wanted me to stay for a banquet he was giving at the Intourist Hotel for forty



- 16 -

relatives and friends. He said he knew Ted Bernstein; Ted's father, he said, was his attorney.

Another American I encountered was a Mr. Polsky, an accountant from Philadelphia (Pa., that is.) He started complaining immediately. He had come to Russia to see the grave of his mother, about sixty miles south of Kiev. The authorities wouldn't give him permission, he said. Apparently he had put in a formal request for the visit, and when nothing happened within a few hours, he started throwing his weight around. He wanted me to get in touch with Jordan in Moscow to "put on some heat." He was furious; he'd been cooling his heels for ten days and his visa had only two more days to go. As he walked away, Alexis said he would have been glad to take him to his mother's grave had he not made an issue of it. Alexis insisted that until he had raised so much fuss, Polsky could have hired an Intourist car and gone on his own. Whether Alexis was right or was pulling my leg, I do not know.

At Kiev, incidentally, Alexis had to have an interpreter, too. He didn't speak Ukrainian. So, with a Ukrainian Intourist guide named Vladamir, we went to an ancient monastery, said by Alexis to be one of the holiest places in the tradition of the Russian church. We were taken through a series of underground tunnels where 140-some saints were interred in glass-topped wooden boxes in tiny alcoves. It was an eerie experience. We had to carry candles all the way. We were with a group, some of whom were highly devout. Alexis told me several had come from hundreds of miles on what, for them, was a pilgrimage of a lifetime, just to pray at this particular place. Others were scoffers, who kept up a running argument with the young monk who was escorting us, as to the reasons for the good state of preservation of some of the bodies. The monk insisted with vehemence, amounting at times to rage, that it was a matter of the grace of God. The scoffers, mostly young Russians, insisted it was a case of good Russian embalming, plus good soil. I stayed out of that one.

In getting off onto the saints, I wandered away from the Americans I ran across in Kiev. Another, who was anything but a saint--he was too attractive and puckish--was a young Princeton graduate named Bill Hardy, from Cincinnati. I met him in the dining room of the Intourist Hotel. Alexis had just left for the night when

- 17 -

this young lad came up and asked in Russian if he might sit at my table. When I responded in English he immediately asked in English if I were American, and I was. He told me he'd been having an awful time. His story was that he had specialized in Russian studies at Princeton and he had come over to Russia to try to arrange to go to school in the USSR next year. He spoke Russian, but he lived American in the best tradition. He had been all over the lot. He had gone up one street and down the other in the down-graded and up-graded areas alike, knocking on doors, visiting with families, playing with children--what a boy! Well, somewhere along the line he had attracted the attention of public authorities. Moscow had apparently taken him in stride--he had spent the night there with a Russian family--but in Kiev they didn't know what to do with him. And he didn't know what to do with himself. His Russian language in the Ukraine made him even more suspect--this Ukraine which was the training ground for Khrushchev. And he didn't help matters by being just a Cincinnati boy. He went from home to home. Kids followed him in the streets. When they asked him "why America wants to make war on us," he told them whoever said that was a damn liar. Well, it was Khrushchev, the Lion of Kiev, who had said it. He went out to the beach and swam with some Ukrainian kids. He played football (soccer) with them; got into a friendly tussle and broke his glasses. He was about to take over the place when he fouled things up with picture-taking. 'Twas just so simple a thing as photographing the headquarters of the Secret Police, which had been pointed out to him by some Ukrainian.

Well, young Mr. Hardy got too much for them, evidently. He had been trying desperately for days to obtain airplane passage out of the country, but to no avail. After taking the picture of the police station, for which he was run in but released, he got his passage posthaste. When I last saw him he was at the Kiev airport, whence I was taking off to Leningrad. Intourist had put a very personable and efficient young lady with him, to see to it that he got on the plane to Vienna. The plane was held up for a few minutes while Mr. Hardy settled for excess weight of luggage, all made up of Russian books. He had an idea toward the last that he was being followed at every step. For that I wouldn't blame the Russians, or even New Yorkers.

- 18 -

Another foreigner I encountered was a gal representing the Evening Standard of London. She was looking for trouble and the Russians were being excessively mean by not giving it to her. She was loud-mouthed and provocative. She was picked up twice, simply by workers for taking pictures of certain things evidently forbidden. But the police shooed her out of the station each time, much to her disgust. She shan't be able to write about her experiences in a Soviet jail.

On our second day in Kiev, Alexis arranged for a motor-boat ride up the Dneiper River. I didn't particularly care to bounce around in a speed boat for an hour, but he insisted and I went along. The Dneiper, apparently, has an importance in Ukrainian history which I didn't understand. As we were making our way down to the boat landing, a nattily-dressed young Russian army lieutenant caught up from behind and passed us. He was saying something which Alexis interpreted to be a quotation from a Ukrainian poet, saying in effect, no bird could fly to the middle of the Dneiper. I asked Alexis in which direction was the Dneiper dam that was blown up by the Germans during the war. For one of two times during my association with him he went blank. "That," he said, "wouldn't have been published in this country." The other time was when I tried to inquire into his teaching experience in Siberia. He changed the subject quickly and firmly.

On the plane from Kiev to Leningrad we met up with a couple of friendly souls. How we met I do not exactly know. The first thing we knew they were engaging us in conversation from the pair of seats immediately in front of us. One identified himself as Alexex Ivanovich Poltozats, editor of "Oitchzna" (Fatherland) and the other was a young Leningrad surgeon, Dr. Arcady Dezazhne, who had been to Kiev to conduct some demonstrations in gynecology. (The English spellings of the names above were supplied by Alexis.) We had morning tea with them in Minsk, whence I was pleased to send a postcard to my old friend, Sol Taishoff, editor and publisher of Broadcasting Magazine in Washington, who was born in Minsk. We saw Alexex Ivonovich Poltozats later, several times, in Leningrad. He had gone over ostensibly to confer with a publisher who was bringing out one of his Ukrainian books in Russian. The doctor wanted to know all about the Mayo Clinic. I found he knew much more than I did.

- 19 -

There wasn't enough unusual about Leningrad, in my terms, to compete for much space here. In truth, the unusual part of it was a slight return to the usual. In terms of my experience it was a large, comparatively attractive and comfortable town. The people were better dressed and apparently gayer than in Moscow or Kiev, but that was due in part, no doubt, to the fact that they were having their best weather in weeks. We arrived there on the split second of schedule. Wherever I went this part of the story was the same. Planes--and I travelled only by airplane--were always off on time and down on time. The crews were pleasant and hospitable, albeit I wished the hostesses had some respect for the sense of smell. Never again will I make dirty remarks about the American deodorant industry. Viva MUM.

But in Leningrad I also had a most memorable experience. I was standing in the door of the Astoria Hotel, where I was quartered, watching the people go by. At that moment I was counting the number of people who passed by without eyeglasses. More than 200 had gone by, from one way or the other, when I looked around and saw a little girl of about ten years staring at me. That wasn't of itself particularly unusual. For wherever an American stops, someone goes up to him to engage his attention. She kept pointing to my necktie. It was a bow tie, itself unusual in the country, but this one was red with black polka dots. Then she pointed to a pin on her sweater. Finally, she unfastened the pin and asked to pin it on me. I agreed, not knowing what in the devil it was. The doorman who was watching this kept trying to tell me what it was all about, but even his Russian must have been bad. Finally, I gave the little girl some American coins and retreated into the lobby. The next day when I told this story to Alexis, he told me that the little girl was a member of the "Young Pioneers." The pin which she gave me, and which I have on my key chain, had the motto "Always Be Prepared." When I remarked that it was substantially the motto of the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts in America, he hastened to assure me that there must be a great difference. This organization, the "Young Pioneers", he said, was a sort of kindergarten for the Communist Party. Youngsters were recruited out of its ranks (its age grouping was from nine to fourteen years) into the Young Communist League and then into the Party itself. He said that only a few went on through to the final step, not because they were unwilling, but because of the rigid requirements of the Party. He took this occasion to tell me that he was not a Party member, though completely in tune with its objectives.

- 20 -

Alexis was a very cultured man. He could quote Shakespeare endlessly; also Mark Twain, O. Henry, James Fenimore Cooper, Charles Dickens and certain other English and American writers. I was told that these are among the selected English-language authors for the USSR. He had no limitations in reference to Russians in any field of the arts--literature, painting and music.

From the time we started on the trip to Kiev and Leningrad I had a hunch that I was going to see one or more of the leaders. On Sunday night before I left on Monday morning, I had attended a press party given by Ilyichev at the Moscow Press Club. Through the intercession of a young Russian journalist named Valentin Bereshnov, Vice-Chief Editor of The New Times, whom I had previously met in the U. S. A., I was privileged to have quite a conversation with Ilyichev. I, of course, put in a word (myself and Jorden) for an interview with someone of high station. Mr. Ilyichev, who was quite drunk, assured us he was trying to work things out, for it was through him that the request had been channeled. When I told him I was leaving the next day, and might not return, he said, in effect, that he'd find me. If I was still in the USSR. Beginning the next day Jorden stepped up his hourly calls to a half-hour basis, and he literally nagged the foreign office half to death, at least for a definite answer. I did not intend returning to Moscow for anything less than the best; otherwise, I was going out to Stockholm from Leningrad.

That Press Club party was another bacchanal. We (Jorden, Frankel and I) got in with a group of loud-mouthed Russians, two of whom spoke excellent English. We drank quite a few toasts with them, downing a glass of vodka with each. Finally, one of them suggested we adjourn to his apartment. His wife, who was there, joined in the warm invitation for "everybody come home with us." As we separated to get our wraps, an act of magic took place. In less time than it takes to tell it, all the Russians had disappeared. They seemed to dissolve into the woodwork. Not one was left. And we haven't heard from one of them since, despite all the promises to "let's get in touch; yes, let's do it tomorrow." The telephone numbers we gathered simply didn't answer. When I took leave of Ilyichev, he raised his glass to propose a toast. Trying to focus on me with his floating eyes,

- 21 -

he said, as translated: "Here's best to The New York Times; of course, what I think is best for The New York Times and what you think is best for The New York Times, are greatly different. But here's to the difference."

On the plane from Moscow to Kiev I thought I'd better take Alexis into my confidence on the possibility that I'd have to return to Moscow to see some of the leaders. His first reaction was: "I am sorry you didn't mention that to me sooner. I might have been able to do something in that direction." But he was highly pleased to be taken in on the intrigue. So, when we arrived at Kiev he arranged to be notified immediately, at any time, of any call for me from Moscow. Every time we came in from a sight-seeing expedition he'd inquire for messages, and then would exhibit pain and disappointment if nothing was there. And so with constant watching of the key box, and listening for the telephone, we came up to Thursday afternoon at Leningrad.

I had a message from Jordan saying he would call at noon. Alexis and I were on edge. Jordan called at noon, but he had had no definite word, one way or another. Alexis had to know something, for if I were returning to Moscow, he had to rearrange all the airplane tickets. He already had arranged with great trouble to get me out from Leningrad to Stockholm via Riga. Jordan said he'd call again at 3 P. M. He did. Still no definite word. Most mystifying of all, there was no turndown. But a decision had to be made. I decided, therefore, to go back to Moscow and catch a plane from there to Stockholm on Saturday morning, the same one I would catch in Riga. Alexis was standing by. Just as I told him what to do, Jordan telephoned. Khrushchev would see me at 6 P. M. the next (Friday) evening (May 10). Alexis and I had forty-five minutes in which to clear out and catch a plane for Moscow. We made it.

The story of the interview has been published. I want to bed rather early to get a good rest. Jordan called about 11 o'clock Friday morning to say that Mr. Khrushchev would like to step up the time to 2:30 P. M. That suited me better. We were told that a car would be sent to the National Hotel for us at 2:10. Jordan had been invited to come along with me. All arrangements were most

- 22 -

agreeable. The car picked us up at 2:10, and we were whisked over to the Communist Party headquarters, about three blocks north of the Kremlin, arriving at 2:20. We were ushered immediately in to Khrushchev, along with Ilyichev, who went up in the elevator with us. We were there until 4:10.

There isn't much I can add to the published story regarding the man and his surroundings. He was outwardly cordial, calm and apparently completely self-assured. He bounced out from behind his desk and greeted me, extending his pudgy little hand. He bade me to a seat near the head of a long wooden table, covered with a half runner of green material. He took a seat directly opposite me. An interpreter took his place at the head of the table. To Khrushchev's left was Ilyichev and to my right, Jorden and a stenographer, who followed us in from the outer office.

I opened the conversation by telling him briefly of my visit to the USSR, mentioning particularly my impressions of the May Day parade. I thanked him for receiving me and asked if I might ask a few questions.

"Please do," he replied.

I then told him that I hadn't come there to argue with him about anything; that the questions I would ask were intended to get a clearer idea of his views and those of his country on certain topics, to pass along to the readers of The New York Times. I told him that I was in charge of the "factual" part of The Times; that I had little or nothing to do with forming the editorial policy and was wholly independent of opinions expressed by the paper. Later, I attempted to illustrate by telling him that whereas The Times editorially had supported Eisenhower for President, I had voted for Stevenson twice and the fact was well known to my superiors. He didn't seem to understand, or at least to believe me.

I read my questions from a list which I had prepared with the help of Salisbury, Daniel and Jorden. The Translator took notes of each question, put it into Russian for Khrushchev and repeated the process in reverse with his answers. At no time did he balk or bridle at a question. The list of questions was quite long. We had made it up in the half expectation that any leader, if he decided to receive me, would require questions in advance. He did not require them, so I

- 23 -

read them personally. I had indicated in my notes a certain priority of questions, however, in case the interview should be cut off before I got them all in. Luckily I did so, for I was able to ask no more than half my list during the hour and fifty minutes with him.

The old boy seemed to enjoy the whole thing. He warmed up as we went along. Repeatedly, as he took long periods in which to give his replies, which I could not immediately understand, I lapsed into reflections. I tried to rise in my mind to the importance of the occasion. I tried to impress upon myself that here I was sitting there at the very center post of the international communist conspiracy, in the presence of the chief engineer of the apparatus; before one of the most powerful individuals in the world, so far as the chances of war and peace were concerned. I could convince myself of this intellectually; I knew these were the facts. But I simply couldn't feel it. I have since tried to analyze this emotional dead-spot. I guess it came from a sort of sense of disgust that this porcine little man, with his toughness and crudeness bulging through any show of good manners should be in such a position; that my generation had permitted the world to get into such a state as to be troubled in any way by this little braggart. The very fact that I had to regard him as of highest material for interview gave me, I am sure, an inner sense of revulsion.

When at the end of the interview I arose to go, he came around to shake hands and wish me well. He brought up again a little side exchange we had had about his coming to the U.S. He said, with a chuckle, he couldn't come as a tourist without being fingerprinted, and he didn't like that. I replied by pulling out my Defense Department Accreditation Card to show him my fingerprints on the back of it. I told him that no one in America took offense at being fingerprinted for such documents.

"Then you must be a criminal," he said with a laugh. He had given off quite a chuckle a moment before when, cutting off the interview--which he said he'd like to continue--he announced he had to go out "to meet the Mongolian delegation."



- 24 -

We withdrew through the outer office into the main corridor. There we saw him again. He raised his little hat as he passed and said: "Off to see the Mongolians."

Only time will tell his place in history, or even his continuing role in the Soviet Union and Communist Party. Theoretically, he is head of an eleven-man Presidium (party governing board) which, again theoretically, decides policies by "majority vote." He is also a member of the top triumvirate of himself, Bulganin and Marshal Zhukov. But I got the definite impression from what I saw and heard that, at least for the present, he is the bull moose. However, there is also the impression throughout the small Western colony (diplomats, correspondents etc.) in Moscow that no one, Khrushchev or anyone else, is going to be allowed soon to fasten a personal Stalin-like rein on the party or the Soviet government if it is within the power of all the others to prevent it.

After leaving Mr. Khrushchev's office, we went to The Times office, which is also Jordan's apartment. There we reconstructed our notes. This took more than two hours. Then I wrote my story. I was told by Jordan that, being a tourist, I might be able to telephone the story to London without check by censorship. I insisted, however, that it go through censor; I wanted to see what, if anything, would be cut out, or if the story would be allowed to go at all. Jordan sent the copy to the telegraph office by Victor, the chauffeur. In an unbelievably short time we received word that the copy had been cleared by censorship and was, in fact, already in New York. Not a word was changed, so far as we were able to tell at the Moscow end.

There is much else to my trip that I shall have to leave for future telling. I'd rather like to tell you, for instance, of the American correspondents and the difficulties under which they live and work. The Jordens have an apartment, which is part of our office. It is regarded here as quite plush, but you certainly wouldn't think it so. At least they have a bath tub and make better use of it than one I saw in a worker's apartment at shoe factory in the city of Kiev. They had kindling wood stored in it. The Frankels live in one room at the Metropole Hotel. Any cooking they do--and Lord knows no one wants to eat out any more than necessary in Moscow--

- 25 -

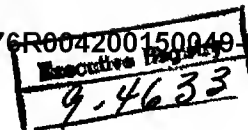
has to be done on an electric hotplate in the one room, which serves as bedroom, sitting room, library, solarium and pantry. Their canned goods are stored in a clothes closet; dishes are washed in the bathroom.

I couldn't help, therefore, feeling guilty when I arrived at the beautifully run, well-stocked Grand Hotel in Stockholm. I appeased my guilt somewhat by bringing Jorden out with me for a few days in Stockholm, and by authorizing him, while there, to buy the Frankel's an electric refrigerator.

As I said at the outset, I cannot qualify as an expert on Russia. As pleasant in most respects as was my trip, I still had a sense of foreboding. How much of that was due to what I saw and heard and how much to my preconceptions, I am unable to judge. From all accounts things are much better there than they were, in terms of human associations. No one would argue for a moment that there are many basic freedoms in American terms. Resident foreigners, particularly Americans, apparently are still subject to many petty annoyances, although perhaps less than before Stalin's death. There is some talk, including warnings about being followed and spied upon. However much of this is done is apparently done mostly to foreign residents, not to tourists. After all, I had a state agent, Alexis, with me all of the time. I didn't fear being followed. I had no secrets that I knew of, and my views could be had by anyone for the asking. I did come away with the feeling, however, that we of the United States can only profit by learning more about these people; that we are foolish to think, if we do, that we can separate them from their regime; that basically we will be more prepared to deal with them, individually or through government, if we take them first as they are and try to learn more about them.

Daddy

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON



June 20, 1957

PERSONAL

MEMORANDUM FOR:

Allen Dulles

I am sending over a document which I received from Arthur Sulzberger. It was written by Turner Catledge to his daughters.

After you have had a chance to read it, would you please return it to me.

*SA*  
Sherman Adams

*Arthur thought you would  
be interested in it.*  
*SA*